

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ABU DH 01826 111044Z

17

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 MC-02 AID-05 IGA-01 EB-07 OMB-01

TRSE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 /063 W

----- 057587

O R 110855Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3308

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 1826

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MASS, PFOR, TC

SUBJECT : FMS--ABU DHABI INTERESTED IN TOW MISSILES

NEA/ARP ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR STERNER

SUMMARY: ABU DHABI DEFENSE FORCE (ADDF) WISHES BUY TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILES FROM US, WITH QUANTITIES, DELIVERY DATES, ETC TO BE WORKED OUT AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH US EXPERT. IN ADDITION MILITARY MERITS OF TOW, SHAIKH ZAYID HAS REPORTEDLY TOLD ADDF/THAT PREFERENCE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO US IN THIS PURCHASE AS EVIDENCE OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS EXISTING AND DESIRED BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. WHILE DELIVERY SCHEDULE APPARENTLY NOT PROBLEM, ADDF HAS PROMISED GIVE COMPETING FRENCH ANSWER

WITHIN MONTH. THEREFORE VISIT BY US EXPERTS REQUIRED ON URGENT BASIS. SUBJECT AMBASSADOR STERNER'S CONCURRENCE AMEMBASSY URGES THAT WE AGREE AT MINIMUM TO SEND EXPERT AS EVIDENCE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION ADDF REQUEST. IF, AS IT NOW APPEARS, WE IN POSITION TAILOR POSSIBLE TOW SUPPLY TO OUR NEEDS AND CONDITIONS, WE BELIEVE SALE OF MISSILES THEMSELVES ALSO VERY MUCH IN USG INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED CONFIDENTIAL FONMINISTRY NOTE DATED AUGUST 26 STATING THAT ABU DHABI DEFENSE FORCE (ADDF) "WOULD LIKE TO BE SUPPLIED WITH ANTI-TANK MISSILES MARK (TOW) MAN-CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ABU DH 01826 111044Z

UFACTURED IN US." SINCE NOTE CONTAINED ABSOLUTELY NO DE-

TAILS BEYOND THIS RATHER BASIC STATEMENT, EMBASSY ASKED MINISTRY WITH WHOM WITHIN ADDF MATTER MIGHT BE DISCUSSED FURTHER. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DELAY (WE HAVE HAD PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH LACK OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN MINISTRY AND DEFENSE FORCE), WE FINALLY RECEIVED CALL SEPT 10 SETTING UP APPOINTMENT FOR CHARGE TO MEET WITH ADDF DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF COL. SAIF AHMED MORNING SEPT 11. THIS MEETING PRODUCED FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

2. ADDF WISHES UPGRADE ITS ANTI-TANK CAPABILITY, NOT IN FACE ANY IDENTIFIABLE THREAT, BUT SIMPLY AS PART OF MODERNIZATION PROCESS. AT MOMENT THEY ARMED ONLY WITH VIGILANT MISSILES (UK MANUFACTURE) WITH WHICH THEY VERY UNHAPPY, AND 106MM RECOILLESS RIFLES. THEY HAVE RECEIVED OFFER FROM FRENCH TO SUPPLY ANTI-TANK MISSILE (NO NAME GIVEN) WHICH CAN APPARENTLY BE MOUNTED ON PANHARD APC'S WHICH ADDF ALSO BUYING FROM FRENCH. COL. SAID STATED SPECIFICALLY, HOWEVER, THAT THEY DO NOT REALLY WANT FRENCH MISSILE.

3. INSTEAD THEY WISH TO ACQUIRE US TOW MISSILES. COL. SAIF WAS FRANK TO SAY THAT THEY KNOW LITTLE OF TOW BEYOND ITS REPUTATION AS SUPERIOR ANTI-TANK WEAPON. IN ADDITION TO WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE ITS MILITARY MERITS, HOWEVER, COL. SAIF STATED THAT THEY HAD SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FROM UAE PRESIDENT SHAIKH ZAYID THAT US SHOULD GET PREFERENCE IN THIS PURCHASE--THAT US-UAE RELATIONS WERE GOOD AND THAT ADDF SHOULD DEMONSTRATE FRIENDLY NATURE OF THESE RELATIONS BY BUYING FROM AMERICANS.

4. WHEN IT COMES TO DETAILS AS TO WHAT IS DESIRED, COL. SAID STATED SIMPLY THAT THEY NEEDED ADVICE. THEY WOULD LIKE US EXPERT TO COME TO ABU DHABI TO ADVISE THEM ON EVERYTHING--FROM PRICE, TO SHOWING THEM HOW TO USE THESE MISSILES, TO WHAT NUMBER WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR NEEDS. IN TERMS OF TIMING, COL. SAIF STATED PROBLEM WAS NOT ONE OF EARLY DELIVERY DATES--ADDR HAD NO SPECIFIC DEADLINE IN MIND. THERE WAS TIME PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IN THAT THEY HAD PROMISED FRENCH AN ANSWER WITHIN MONTH FROM NOW AS TO WHETHER THEY WOULD TAKE FRENCH MISSILES. THEREFORE THEY NEEDED TO GET US EXPERTS THERE QUICKLY, TO LEARN WHAT POSSIBILITIES

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ABU DH 01826 111044Z

WERE FROM OUR SIDE AND THEN TO MAKE DECISION. IF DECISION WENT IN FAVOR OF TOW AND US PREPARED TO SELL, THEN DELIVERY COULD BE DELAYED (I THREW OUT ONE YEAR JUST AS EXAMPLE AND COL. SAID GAVE NO INDICATION THIS WOULD BE PROBLEM). THIS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY TRUE IF THEY COULD GET TOKEN DELIVERY AT EARLIER DATE. IN BRIEF, THEY NEEDED TO KNOW THAT WE PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO SUPPLY TOW. THAT WOULD PROVIDE BASIS FOR DECLINING FRENCH OFFER. DETAILS--WITH-

IN REASON--RE OUR SUPPLY COULD BE WORKED OUT IN LIGHT OF  
ADVICE AND INFORMATION BROUGHT BY EXPERT.

5. I TOLD COL. SAIF THAT I WOULD, OF COURSE, CONVEY THEIR  
REQUEST, INCLUDING DETAILS HE HAD PROVIDED ME, TO WASHINGTON-  
X IMMEDIATELY. I TOLD HIM THAT I FRANKLY COULD NOT PRE-  
DICT RESPONSE. I NOTED THAT, WHILE WISHING TO AVOID GETTING  
INTO ARMS SUPPLY RACE HERE, WE CERTAINLY WISHED TO  
HELPFUL WHERE WE COULD IN HELPING ABU DHABI, AND  
UAE IN GENERAL, MEET ITS LEGITIMATE DEFENSE NEEDS. BUT  
THERE WERE REAL PROBLEMS IN CASE MANY ITEMS OF MILITARY  
EQUIPMENT--COMPETING PRIORITIES, LIMITED SUPPLY W D THE  
LIKE. I COULD THEREFORE ONLY PROMISE THAT WE WOULD GIVE  
THEIR REQUEST EVERY CONSIDERATION AND GIVE THEM A  
RESPONSE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

6. COMMENT/ACTION REQUESTED: OUR FIRST REACTION ON RE-  
CEIPT FONMINISTRY NOTE WAS THAT THIS REQUEST WOULD  
PRESENT PROBLEMS. NOT ONLY WAS THIS SOPHISTICATED, NEW  
TECHNOLOGY TYPE WEAPON IN HIGH DEMAND, BUT WE ANTICIPATED  
THAT ADDF WOULD PROBABLY WANT MANY OF THEM AND IMMEDIATELY.  
LATTER PROBLEM, AT LEAST, HAS NOT DEVELOPED, HOWEVER.  
IN FACT, ADDF REQUEST STRIKES US AS VERY REASONED, SEEKING TO MEET  
LEGITIMATE, IF NOT IMMEDIATE DEFENSIVE NEED IN ENTIRELY REALISTIC  
TIME FRAME. OF COURSE, WHEN WE GET DOWN TO DETAILS, PROBLEMS  
MAY ARISE. IF WE WERE UNABLE DELIVER TOW FOR THREE YEARS,  
FOR EXAMPLE, THEN TIMING MIGHT BECOME FACTOR AGAIN. BUT  
THAT STRIKES US AS PROBLEM TO BE FACED WHEN AND IF IT ARISES.  
FOR PRESENT, IT APPEARS WE HAVE SOMEWHAT UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY  
IN CASE FMS SALE TO TAILOR CONDITIONS OF POSSIBLE SALE  
LARGELY TO OUR REQUIREMENTS. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE  
THAT WE SHOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY, AND IN TIME FRAME IN-  
DICATED, AT LEAST TO REQUEST THAT EXPERT COME TO ABU  
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PAGE 04 ABU DH 01826 111044Z

DHABI TO DISCUSS TOW. EVEN IF MJN END WE UNABLE TO MEET  
REQUIREMENTS OF ADDF IN THIS INSTANCE, BY SENDING EXPERT WE WILL  
BE GIVING CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT WE TREATING REQUEST SERIOUSLY.  
WE WILL AT MINIMUM BE PROVIDING POSITIVE POLITICAL RESPONSE  
TO WHAT COL. SAIF HAS STATED IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY  
POLITICAL ACTION ON UAE'S PART. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE  
ADVISE IF IT POSSIBLE TO SEND SUCH EXPERT. IF, AS WE URGE,  
ANSER IS YES, PLEASE INDICATE ANTICIPATED TIME OF ARRIVAL.  
INDIVIDUAL SELECTED SHOULD AS INDICATED BE NOT ONLY TECHNI-  
CALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE RE TOW AND ITS EMPLOYMENT, BUT ALSO  
BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS AT LEAST IN GENERAL TERMS QUESTIONS  
OF PRICE AND AVAILABILITY.  
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